

Dear General Moore:

Medicaid must be protected. We are all troubled by the budget shortfall; however, this shortfall is much bigger than just Medicaid. It is a problem we face with the entire budget. This coming Friday, January 25, I will unveil my budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2003, recommendations which fund the necessary services for the people of Mississippi without touching the principal of the Health Care Trust Fund.

My health care plan is bigger than just Medicaid as well. Through this plan, we will be able to help provide the following: Prescription drugs for our senior citizens; screenings for diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer and cervical cancer; school nurses for our children; and better access to health care for disabled individuals. We also have a plan to improve the health insurance plan for state and public school employees.

This administration will also continue to focus on economic development. By maintaining a strong investment in bringing good, quality jobs to Mississippi, we can help lift our folks up and put them in positions where they can afford health care.

I have been working with the legislative leadership on this issue and believe we will reach a solution.